1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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241 *pilkali* system is that the middlemen charged commission for negotiating sales
but took no stock risks. Thus, when wholesalers and retailers had satisfied their
441 requirements, playing for safety themselves, the *pilkali* merely informed some
435 unfortunate producers that their product could not be sold. The prices attained
for that which could be sold varied with the skill of the *pilkali*. Since many
Maltese farmers need forward credit for various purposes, it was perfectly
natural that the *pilkal* became not only a middleman but a supplier of credit and
therefore to some extent a controller of production. The whole of this system
resulted from two simple facts. First, the quantities of individual items that
most farmers could daily offer for sale were so small as to make some con-
centrating agency a logical development. Secondly, the social legacy of dichotomy
between town and country meant that the farmer was most often incapable of
dealing directly with his market. Questions of literacy, language and social
status still often put the farmer in a position of inferiority. The *pilkali* bridged
that gap. In so doing they have sometimes exploited the farmers' ignorance.
Many and vivid are the stories heard of their dishonesty; one such, told by
several farmers, concerned the spring export crop of potatoes in 1955. They
had been told by middlemen that the U.K. market had been depressed by com-
petition from France and Spain and that therefore the prices offered would have
to be low. In fact, shippers declared that the poor quality of the 1954 crops had
discouraged some buyers but that the f.o.b. prices were still very much higher
than reported by the middlemen. Most *pilkali* are no doubt honest but many
farmers bypass them where possible and most others have suspicions - mostly
born of their own ignorance.

During World War II, control of all agricultural produce had to be estab-
lished and, since this time, the financial side of such transactions has been
controlled by Government clerks at established *pilkali* markets although the
middlemen still handle the actual sales. The intrusion of Governmental financial
control has not removed suspicion although it has removed part of the cause of
it at the cost of a higher commission charged to the producer. The annual cost
of this protection and the controls mentioned below to individual farmers and
to small co-operatives is almost £23,000 (5).

Another development has further confused the situation. Stemming from
wartime controls, policies aimed at controlling prices for the benefit of the
consumer have replaced the old attitude of *caveat emptor*. Various methods
have been adopted but they are all based on regulating maximum retail prices,
directly and by fixing maximum profit margins and percentages of profit. As
noted by many observers, and effectively by an Adviser on Marketing (6), such
controls cannot be strictly enforced and it is impossible to make them
sufficiently flexible to encourage the production virtues of improved quality and
evenness of supply in time. It must suffice here to say that the marketing side
of commercial agriculture is not in a satisfactory state, being as it is costly,
wasteful and very beneficial neither to consumer nor to producer judging by a
great number of local statements.

234 The local market for livestock products is very different. All milk (7) legally
435 sold is bought by the Milk Marketing Undertaking which in practice accepts any
quantity of milk delivered to the collecting depots dispersed through the Islands.
There is a tendency to restrict goats' milk acceptances during the summer
441 period of glut by relating summer and winter ratios. Many producers still have
written contracts but more important than individual arrangements is the
469 negotiating power of the K.M.H. (the union of milk producers already cited) which
incorporates about half of the 600 or so registered producers in the island of
Malta. The fixed and scheduled prices paid to producers bear no real relation
to production costs since these are not known but rather result from M.M.U.-
K.M.H. negotiations and political and welfare decisions by the Government. The
M.M.U. takes full risk over wastage and excess production of liquid milk and
processed milk products, but is partly able to offset losses by trading profits
on imports of dried, evaporated and condensed milk which sales it handles. The
M.M.U. now distributes all legally sold liquid milk, as well as its own milk
products, and retail prices are fixed by announcement. In 1955-56 the result

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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hair short, are not allowed to wear neckties, and must wear jackets in public. Female members are obliged to wear the traditional Maltese *ghonella* (also *faldetta*). This is a black silk cowl which renders the wearer completely shapeless. Finally, all members are tied by a promise of celibacy. Since members usually enter the society as children, and work up through grades until they become full members, this promise ensures that all are either bachelors or spinsters.

The male and female sections are completely separate. Each meets daily under its respective superior in its own house. There the members hold devotional exercises, conduct study groups for adults and also teach catechism to the children. The superiors are normally elected for life; but if the members cannot agree, the national superior general, after consultation with the parish priest, appoints an acting superior, either from the village or from outside groups.

The society is somewhat unusual among village religious associations, since no member of the village clergy is directly involved in its activities, though priests are often invited in to give lectures. This relatively independent status, and the close contact that members maintain with their national headquarters, has led some parish priests to look upon it as a potential threat to their authority and consequently to oppose its establishment in their parishes. Thus, although the society has spread to 40 (83 per cent) of the Maltese parishes, it is only established in 6 (40 per cent) of those in Gozo, Malta's conservative sister island. In point of fact, wherever it has been established it has supported the authority of the parish priest, and its members are now among the staunchest opponents of the Labour Party.

In each parish there are usually several loosely organized groups such as the Association of Christian Mothers and the Holy Name Society which meet infrequently for special prayers and devotions.

Finally, there is at least one confraternity in each parish. A confraternity is a lay religious society which is dedicated to a particular saint and offers Masses for dead members. These societies, called *fratellanzi*, are the oldest associations in Malta, and many date back to the Middle Ages. Formerly certain confraternities in the larger villages and towns acted as trade guilds; others only enrolled persons of the highest socio-economic class. Both men and women may enrol, as members; but only men may wear the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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MLP cost them their jobs.[1] Others have friends or relatives on the other side with whom they do not wish to break. Yet others, responsible for maintaining the unity of a neutral club, fear that an open stand will bring about a crisis which would divide it. Although most of these persons continue to read the condemned papers, they do so discreetly, for reading them openly would provoke incidents. There are also a large number of Labour sympathizers who have been unwilling to forego the sacraments of the Church. They no longer read the Labour papers or attend MLP rallies, but they are bitter about having been forced to make the choice.

The physical act of purchasing a Labour newspaper has in itself become a public statement of political allegiance. After the condemnation and the threat of a general Church boycott of their premises (which was carried out in Gozo) most vendors have refused to handle MLP publications. In the villages they can usually only be bought at the local MLP club. Thus the act of striding across the village square and into the stronghold of the devil, performed in front of many of the village elders, becomes an open declaration of sympathy with the Labour cause. In Kortin many wait until the square is empty, usually around midnight in the summer, and then scuttle into the club to get their papers.

III

There is a correlation between occupational class and support for one of these two ideological divisions. In general, professionals, white-collar workers and farmers support the Archbishop, and industrial labourers the Labour Party. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, the Labour Party is a working-man's party, and there is ideological support for it on that account. Although the MLP has a definitely socialist ideology, and is a member of the Socialist International (points on which the Church attacks it regularly), it advocates few of the measures associated with doctrinaire Socialism, such as public ownership of transport and industry or the collectivization of farming. On the other hand, it does promise equal opportunity for all, and 'the right of the

[1] The Malta Government Circular of 19 October 1960 prohibited most grades of civil servants from holding office in political organizations or publicly expressing their political views. This regulation is something of a paradox in a small country in which most intellectuals work for the government in one capacity or another.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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people to have the final say in the nation's vital means of production.'[1] These policies have a general appeal to labourers and are among the reasons for the party's popularity.

The Labour Party is closer to the worker than any of the other political parties. In this respect, its organization resembles that of the Church. As already noted, the MLP rests on its village and district organization. This has enabled the average worker to have a say of sorts, not only in his party's policy, but, when it was in power, also in the affairs of government. How he and his neighbours were able to manipulate the party structure to their advantage is a matter which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

During its period in office the Labour Party did much to improve conditions for the workers and the poor. This is another reason why many support it. It introduced many social benefits, including the extension of medical services, regular allotments of free food and social assistance allowances for the needy and aged. It also built many new schools, surfaced dusty roads and undertook other large public works projects which gave employment to many, besides benefiting the community. Moreover, the party did a great deal to improve agriculture by bringing in foreign experts who set up an advisory service and introduced new crops and techniques of cultivation. All these and the general atmosphere of activity which permeated the Labour Government, gained great popularity for the party and its leader.

There is yet another important way in which the MLP attracts many: it has attacked the established authority of Britain, the Church, the local captains of industry and the prosperous members of society. This outlook appeals not only to many poor and underprivileged persons, but also to the young and the uninfluential who are seeking to establish their personal independence and to make their mark on society. This opposition to authority and vested interests holds an attraction for many social 'misfits', such as the young 'Teddy Boy' element, the eccentrics and free thinkers. These find in the MLP a haven for their nonconformity to the social and moral teaching of the Church. Though social and religious stigma still attaches to them, many find it easier to bear in the company of others who have similar beliefs and problems. The Labour Party has thus provided social outcasts with a sense of

[1] MLP manifesto. See Appendix B.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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'belonging', and to a certain extent has created for them a community of their own. These persons often make up the hard core of Labour supporters in their villages, since they have nothing to lose by openly fighting the Church.

A number of sociological explanations can be advanced to account for the support professionals, white-collar workers and farmers give to the Church. First of all, professionals generally lose status in the eyes of their colleagues, if not the wider society, if they join the Labour Party or sympathize with it. It is a working-class party, and they are professionals. There are a number of notable exceptions to this, but the only professionals that I met who sympathized with the MLP were either candidates for office with it or members of the Executive. The political ideology of their colleagues and the expectations of their clients combine to make them look upon the Labour Party as the antithesis of everything they have been brought up to believe in. They, through their offices in parish associations and through their work as doctors, lawyers, high civil servants, and so on, form part of the establishment to which the Labour Party is opposed.

Much the same reasoning can be applied to the white-collar workers. As teachers, clerks and other intermediate grade civil servants they hold a relatively high position in the social hierarchy of their villages. Many are anxious to identify themselves with their social superiors, those in control of the village as well as their employers, and thus look down upon the MLP as opposed to their interests. Moreover most of them have been educated at colleges run by the Church. There their teachers gave them additional religious instruction and strengthened those values which make the anti-clerical tone of the Labour Party repugnant to them.

Farmers, on the other hand, are looked down upon by many and are regarded as underprivileged by all. Why is it then that they do not support the Labour Party? Farmers in most communities are very conservative, and those in Malta are no exception. Their solitary occupation isolates them from the Labour Party ideology which is so freely discussed among the industrial workers of Malta. Not only that, but as we have seen, they are among the most poorly educated section of the community. Many are unable to read the propaganda which the MLP disseminates through its publications. This isolation from the secular and materialistic ideologies which enter the country through the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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463 Grand Harbour and first establish themselves in the conurbation
467 surrounding it has helped to keep the farmer devoutly tied to the
465 Church. For this reason the action of the MLP in challenging the authority of the Bishops is as abhorrent to him as it is difficult to understand.

463 The recent sanctions of the Church have increased the class
578 alignment of those who support the Labour Party and those who
665 oppose it. This is largely because those with high social status have
795 more to lose than industrial workers, and are thus more vulnerable to the pressure of public opinion and the Church. The
[626] increasingly heavy pressure of the Church has forced many of the young professionals and intellectuals to abandon the party for which they voted in 1955. But even when the MLP was in office, its policies began to alarm many in the professional and middle classes. They objected not only to Mintoff's attitude to the Church, but also to the somewhat abrupt way his government occasionally dealt with the professional and business communities. Many were disturbed by the MLP's rather sudden switch from advocating integration with Britain to demanding complete independence. As most of those who left the party or became inactive in it were moderates, both in their approach to the Church and to the economic and political problems facing Malta, the MLP has become more extreme in its outlook. This in turn
[656] induced others to leave it. This process was accelerated by the regulations which prohibited the better-educated civil servants from taking an active part in the political life of their country.

463 Table 7 below shows the rough correlation between occupa-
665 tional class and support of the Malta Labour Party. In particular,
666 it demonstrates that as the proportion of skilled workers decreases, so does the proportion of voters who support Labour. Other variables are the number of professionals and farmers. The Second and Fourth Electoral Districts polled the highest number of Labour votes in the 1962 election, and the Sixth and Tenth the lowest. The MLP polled 56 per cent of the total votes in the Second Electoral District, where 45 per cent of the working population are classified as skilled labourers.

In contrast, it received only 6 per cent of the votes in Gozo, where only 16 per cent of the people are skilled labourers, but 38 per cent are engaged in agriculture. Another important variable is the number of clergy resident in a district. The relatively high

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would therefore seem that as this need becomes more pronounced, and as the Maltese voter gains in sophistication, there will be increasing pressure to change the present system of voting to one which strengthens the national government rather than weakens it.

VI

In addition to personal kin ties, patrons, political parties and politicians, pressure groups provide yet another way by which the villager can influence authorities outside his community. By bringing interest groups from one village into contact with similar groups in other villages, they permit united action for the resolution of common problems. The band clubs and football clubs have active national associations. Village lay apostolate societies have their own national bodies as well as the Diocesan Coordinating Junta, a powerful body which has now become one of the strongest forces opposed to the MLP. In view of the important part it and the other Church societies played in defeating the Labour Party in the recent election, they will probably be able to provide a channel of contact with the Ministers and anti-Labour MLA's. Some have already begun to apply pressure to obtain playgrounds and public conveniences for their respective villages.

Even the festa partiti have their associations. The Association of Secondary Feasts works to obtain new Church privileges for its members. It is opposed by the Association of Titular Feasts, which has formally advised the Archbishop that if he grants privileges to the secondary partiti, its members will stop celebrating the titular feasts.

Finally, there are also a number of trade unions. Though most have no village level organization or representatives, and play no direct part in village politics, some, in particular the General Workers Union and the Gozo Agricultural Co-operative Society, a large proportion of whose members live in the villages, play an important part in national politics. They thus provide another channel through which persons at the village level can influence decisions at the national level.

654 herdsman to produce a now over-grown dairy industry
426 (v. figures of milk purchases and surpluses earlier in this
454 Section).

Similar problems arise from the way in which the loans have helped farmers to acquire machinery for working their fields. As regards the small rotary cultivators this may be to the good but the position of the larger type of tractor is much more doubtful (v. Section 2), and little advisory control is at present being exercised.

UNIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES

829 The farmers' attitude to officialdom and 'Gvern' has
467 been characterized by suspicion and doubt. But certainly no less strained have been relations between one farmer and another. An 'every man for himself' attitude has emerged on the administrative side of farming in the Islands, though not at the level of small-scale economic
[474] co-operation (Section 2). The main outcome of this has been that Unions of farmers have had only a limited appeal and even marketing Co-operatives have only recently assumed
[747] any importance. The very recent tractor co-operatives (Section 2) are proving successful but would probably not have begun without free donations of equipment by C.A.R.E.[29].

A common attitude met among all types of farmers in the Islands is that "Unions can do nothing for the farmer". At present there are two but, even together, they account for a very small part of the farming population and certainly have little effect on policy or on the organization of the farming industry. One of the two Unions was founded thirty years ago but the entire administration appears to be in the hands of one man and the farmers themselves take no part in it. In 1956 a faction within the Union broke away and registered a second Union but this too has been supported by a very small number of individuals[43]. The fear at all times is that someone with education and ambitions will make use of such a Union for his own good and have no concern for the welfare of the farmers. Too ignorant and illiterate to speak for himself the farmer believes he is surrounded by treachery on all sides and consequently withdraws from all combined effort. He is still enough a peasant at heart to believe that his own interests can best be served by he himself maintaining strict independence in his farming. This emerges throughout the projects of official help to the farming community outlined above.

829 It has also precluded the development of a substantial
474 co-operative movement in agricultural marketing and trading.

829 The details of the Co-operatives as they do exist merit
474 a more detailed mention since it is likely that they will grow in importance in the future and concern a rather larger proportion of the farming population than at present.

474 In October, 1957, there were ten co-operatives in Malta concerned with the marketing of agricultural produce: Rabat (171 members), Żabbar (86), Dingli (78), Siġġiewi (59), St. Paul's Bay (52), Żebbuġ (37), Mellieħa (33), Qormi (23), Gudja (22), and Mġarr (16). All but two of these were officially registered in 1947[44]. The ten societies are independent but have delegate representation in an eleventh body, the Farmers' Central Co-operative. In addition, there were in 1957 two other Co-operatives in Malta, one with only the minimum twelve members who clung to their complete independence, and the Co-operative Stores Malta with 80 members, the sole consumers' society. Of the four Co-operatives in Gozo at the time only one had any capital or was able to organize a market centre for Gozo farmers. All four were concerned with the distribution of fodder.

474 The two features of the Co-operative movement impor-
829 tant in the present discussion are (i) the very small number of farmers who will have anything to do with it, and (ii) the fact that the movement was initiated not by farmers but by the Government, whose official policy is now to encourage the development of both consumer and producer co-operatives in the Islands[44].

The Malta Milk Company (Il-Kumpanija Maltija tal-Halib) is an independent and privately run body to be distinguished from the official Milk Marketing Undertaking (M.M.U.). The organization of the Company appears to depend entirely on one man who, as secretary and manager, claims to present the milk producers' grievances to the M.M.U. authorities. Numbers of herdsmen regard the Company as able to secure for them more favourable selling conditions than they could obtain as individuals. Being mostly illiterate they feel unable to speak for themselves on such matters and yet are not inclined to support one or other of the Unions. How the producer does in fact benefit from membership of the Company is not in fact clear and some at least of its status in their eyes appears to depend on the personality of the secretary-manager[45].

474 Whatever future developments the farming Unions and
469 Co-operatives may produce it is clear that at present only
829 a small part of the farming population is concerned in either. Of the 5,635 full-time farmers in Malta in 1957 (B/164) only 589, or some 10.5% were members of the eleven producer co-operatives in the Island[46]. Fewer than one

829 474 467 in three of the 7,813 full-time farmers in both Islands at the time were even nominal members of either Union, one of which could claim to represent 25% of the farming population and the other only 6%[43].

829 467 As long as the farmers' Unions continue to represent only a minority of producers and to be divided among themselves there is little likelihood of their being able to benefit those in the industry. But the writer maintains that the grievances of the farmer today are not of the kind in which Union action could effect fundamental improvements because the position of the industry at present and at least in the immediate future depends on a policy of official benevolence. More precisely, this includes the range of financial, material and advisory assistance discussed above.

829 474 The farmer does however stand to make real gains from an efficient and popular co-operative movement. The present limited appeal of the co-operative system is a major drawback. In his interim report on the attitudes of the farming community, Fr. Cirillo observes that "the indifference and open hostility of the majority of farmers towards co-operatives can be partially explained by the fact that they are not able to give farmers the services which are expected of them....they are not in a position to operate as true marketing societies" (B/387, p.18). Fr. Cirillo also points to the mistrust of local co-operative organizers on the part of many farmers who have, moreover, never completely overcome their suspicion of the Government initiative behind the movement.

829 474 442 [426] It is clear that the system of marketing produce is the main weakness at present. Up to now most farmers have marketed their produce through a pitkal. This pitkal is a selling middleman who maintains a stall at one of the pitkalili centres at each of which is a Government-appointed clerk. The pitkal has also served a secondary function as a money lender to farmers who regularly deal with him. Fr. Cirillo observes that "many farmers would not join a co-operative society because of the fear that they might lose their pitkal's friendship" and "the farmer's dependence on the pitkal makes him look at the pitkal with respect" (B/387, pp.17-18). In 1957 it was proposed to centralize the marketing of produce through a single centre for the whole Island (B/253), but at least one of the farmers' Unions was quick to announce its opposition to the plan (B/54 - 11.6.1957, p.4). As on many parallel occasions the farmer was here faced with a choice:- between trusting the Union or 'Il-Gvern'. In most cases he would not venture to make his own decision on the matter.